

STRUCTURAL BUILDING COMPONENTS MAGAZINE (FORMERLY WOODWORDS)

November 2000

Across the Board

"WTCA Open Quarterly Meeting Summary: October 14, 2000" by Scott Arquilla

Mary Pat Keller, WTCA's new President, called the meeting to order with a request for introductions and execution of the Antitrust Statement. Board Minutes from the July meeting in Madison were approved and accepted. Treasurer/President-Elect Michael Ruede, Trussway, Ltd., and Secretary Scott Arquilla, Best Homes, Inc., were also introduced as new officers along with new Board members. The Board meeting had the largest attendance in recent history, with more than 80 present.

Mary Pat provided the schedule for the coming year's Open Quarterly Board Meetings:

January 25-27 in South Padre Island, TX,
May 3-4 in Washington, D.C.,
July 26-28 in Portland, OR
and the BCMC meeting November 3 in Louisville, KY.

Specific locations and details can be provided by WTCA staff should any member wish to attend. As always, our meetings are open to every member (and non-member) and we encourage your attendance.

Ron Donnini, BCMC 2000 Chairman, provided details of this year's show. A record 63,800 square feet were sold, 2,123 attendees visited the show, and 24 new exhibitors were on the show floor. Final financial results should be available in early December.

The Treasurer's report through September 2000 noted an operating deficit of \$274,000. This does not include any revenue generated by BCMC, nor the off-budget items, such as the expected \$50,000 expenditure for QC testing approved last May. We are expecting to tap into our reserves significantly this year given all of the projects the Board agreed were mandatory to undertake. At present, our Association has \$360,000 in reserves—about one-third of a year's annual operating budget. Don Hershey recommended that the Board look at increasing the reserves to one year's operating budget to allow the Association to continue at full strength should an economic downturn occur.

The Executive Committee reported that Kirk Grundahl had a successful first meeting with the new Florida Executive Committee. We are planning a Florida Component Manufacturers Issue Summit on January 11-12, 2001. Also, the Executive Committee proposed a schedule of new dues levels to allow WTCA to exist at the current level of services being demanded by our members

without reliance upon BCMC, our industry-endorsed insurance program and investment revenue, the last two of which have been highly erratic and undependable. After much discussion, the Board approved the new dues levels, the first adjustment since 1989. Members will receive notification of this adjustment in the near future.

The Board approved "Concepts that the Truss Industry would Appreciate Consideration of from our Lumber Supplying Industry" and a "Joint SFPA, SLMA, WTCA Position Paper on Joint Activities." The purpose of both papers was to affirm a continued, close working relationship with the lumber industry to advance the use of wood and to solve problems that face both lumber and truss manufacturers. Both Papers agree that in some cases we may choose to disagree, but both sides need to consider each other's point of view as industry strategies are prepared.

Lenny Sylk introduced the Tom Carbeck Research Institute, a 501(c)(3) corporation that WTCA will use to promote research and testing. We plan to have a silent auction at BCMC 2001 in Louisville to raise money for the initial funding of the Institute.

Richard Brown discussed the Past Presidents meeting in Biloxi, MS., in which the Past Presidents suggested various alternatives for chapter representation on the Board and future Board structure as well as a request that the Board provide Board Meeting synopses to each chapter representative for distribution to the membership.

Kirk discussed the value of the WTCA's annual contribution to the NAHB Research Foundation, which was again approved during this meeting. Kirk stated we have reaped many benefits by serving our customers' association. WTCA has been asked to be a speaker during the NAHB convention educational seminars for builders and serves on the PATH Steering Committee, as PATH Quality Working Group Co-Chair, the NAHB Building Materials Task Force and the NAHB Manufactured Housing Task Force.

Kirk then updated the Board of the status of the Houston Fire Department/TMAT educational efforts. This action dates back to last winter when a Houston McDonald's fire took two firefighter's lives. TMAT responded by getting WTCA engaged in an interview with a local television station in response to negative press on the use of wood trusses. This coming week, the Houston Fire Department will be filming an instructional video at Trussway to educate fire fighters about the design, manufacture and use of trusses. All in all, an open dialog has been established that WTCA hopes will grow into a national educational opportunity with the fire fighting community.

Various representatives of the lumber industry offered updates on their Associations, all of which requested continued dialog with WTCA, despite some issues on which we differ in opinion. Of most importance, the Softwood Lumber Agreement expires March 31, 2001.

Dave Gromala of Weyerhaeuser commented on AWC's reluctance to support the National Research Council of Canada testing of lumber-based fire endurance assemblies due to the lower time requirements in Canada versus the U.S. WTCA has commented to AWC and AF&PA regarding our concern that fire endurance performance issues may impact the competitiveness of our

products. AWC's Technical Committee is now addressing this problem on an active basis. Furthermore, it was noted that NFPA 5000, a new building code, is being introduced to compete with the new consensus IBC and IRC building codes, which are being finalized.

The Formosan Termite issue was discussed briefly. The State of Louisiana recently finalized a recommendation that treated lumber be used by home builders. This issue will not go away because of the inability to use adequate treatments to kill the termite. Further, various groups continue to criticize wood use due to the termite issue. At present, it does not appear that the termite issue will not have an impact on truss manufacturers.

Lumber Certification issues were also discussed by the Board. In addition to Home Depot and Lowe's, who have previously agreed to convert all lumber purchases to certified suppliers, homebuilders, such as Centex, have requested truss suppliers certify that all lumber used in trusses be certified in the near future. According to many suppliers, this should not present a problem for our industry.

Kelly McCloskey, Chairman of the Wood Promotion Network, formerly the Wood is Good Campaign, gave a substantial overview of the planned three-year, \$45 million advertising campaign to promote wood as a superior building material which is natural and renewable. A lengthy comment period ensued with differing opinions as to who should be a target of the campaign as well as the size of the effort.

The Board received other Key Industry Supplier Updates from the representatives of the Connector, I-Joist/LVL, Glu-lam, and Panel Products industries.

Lumberman's Underwriting Assurance (LUA), WTCA's newly endorsed workers comp and liability insurance carrier, reported that their booth at BCMC was invaluable and many new leads and requests for information were received. LUA and our insurance adviser, Bob Bush, plan to continue to further promote the insurance program to our members.

The Board was requested to review previous years' and the upcoming year's priorities by Kirk and Mary Pat. Finalization of the priorities aid the completion of the 2001 budget, which will be presented for approval at the next Board meeting.

Numerous Chapters presented updated news for the Board. Of special interest were the two Sierra Club proposals on the ballots in Arizona and Colorado to approve controlled growth initiatives. The Arizona Chapter has spent considerable time promoting full education of the public on these issues, after which it appears voters understand the many problems that would arise if approved. Both Chapters stated approval would cause the ballot initiatives to appear on many states in the future. Opposition is being lead by the Home Builders Associations in each state.

Being no further Business, the Board adjourned.

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